



## WSSD+5 PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 3 APRIL 2000

### PLENARY

Chair Maquiera opened the PrepCom by introducing the provisional agenda (A/AC.253/12), which the Plenary adopted. He outlined the PrepCom's division of work, noting that Working Group I would be chaired by himself, Working Group II by Koos Richelle (Netherlands) and Working Group III by Bagher Asadi (Iran). Working Group III will meet in two sessions a day during the coming week to discuss the draft political declaration (A/AC.253/L.5/Rev. 2/Part I), while Working Groups I and II will each meet for one session a day on the further actions document (A/AC.253/L.5/Rev. 2 Part/III) until the declaration is completed. Chair Maquiera introduced the PrepCom's three facilitators: Ion Gorita (Romania), Aurelio Fernandez (Spain) and Sonia Felicity Elliott (Guyana).

Minister Zola Skweyiya, Chair of CSD-38, presented the Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the WSSD (A/AC.253/L.5/Rev.2/Part II). In reviewing critical challenges, he stated that negotiations should be informed by the need to build a people-centered, sustainable development process, and underscored the importance of gender mainstreaming and the plight of the least developed countries.

John Langmore, Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development, briefed delegates on activities prior to the Special Session. He introduced the draft political declaration and a compilation of reports prepared by agencies of the UN system. He noted that the comprehensive reports provide a basis for a well-informed debate, and hoped the June session could be remembered as a "Special Session on social justice."

Chair Maquiera urged delegates to uphold a spirit of consensus building and to act not only as country representatives but as people who will be proud of their contributions towards ending poverty, unemployment and social inequities.

### WORKING GROUP I

On the further initiatives document, Working Group I agreed on text under Commitment 1 asking governments to adopt an integrated focus to incorporating social objectives in decision-making. Groups differed on multiple proposals to add references to local, national, regional and international levels, and the text remains bracketed. The G-77/CHINA offered new text on respecting human rights and the

right to development, while the EU and the US proposed language on including the right to development. The G-77/CHINA agreed, and suggested adding a reference to religious and cultural values. While acknowledging that similar language appeared in the POA, the EU requested that this reference remain in brackets.

On text concerning renewed commitments to responsive governance, the group agreed to language on social and people-centered sustainable development consistent with the POA. The G-77/CHINA disagreed with EU and US proposals to delete language on equitable access, transparency and accountability. The EU supported reference to equal rather than equitable access, while the G-77/CHINA preferred equity. The text remains bracketed.

On a reference to reinforcing peace, security, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the EU objected to a G-77/CHINA proposal to insert the right to development by, *inter alia*, promoting peace and respect for diversity. The EU, supported by the US, proposed moving language on settling disputes by peaceful means to the draft political declaration. The G-77/CHINA suggested deleting the paragraph, and it remains in brackets.

### WORKING GROUP II

Under Commitment 2, the G-77/CHINA proposed, and other delegates supported, text on further initiatives for poverty eradication based on POA language. In a reference to halving the number of people in extreme poverty by 2015, the US withdrew a proposal that this refer only to developing countries. The EU and the G-77/CHINA said they would reconsider language, including references to social development instead of policy-making, and to cooperation with civil society. The group accepted a reference to reducing poverty with a view to eradicating it.

Delegates debated proposals from the US and NORWAY on linking health and education to poverty eradication, with the EU suggesting moving the text to the commitment on health and education. The text remains bracketed. Delegates discussed ways to integrate references to poverty eradication strategies, goals and targets. CANADA called for retaining language on sustainable and pro-poor growth strategies that enhance the ability of men and women to take advantage of world markets. No agreement was reached.

The EU supported a G-77 formulation on encouraging the growth of small and medium enterprises. The US added a reference to productive enterprises, while the EU proposed, and the G-77/CHINA opposed, text on labor standards. The text remains bracketed.

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On addressing the informal sector, the G-77/CHINA opposed an EU proposal on improving working conditions through respect for fundamental rights. Delegates accepted a G-77/CHINA proposal on micro-credit and other financial instruments. The EU suggested strengthening and expanding as well as establishing such instruments, and proposed, with G-77/CHINA support, a reference to marginalized people and vulnerable groups. The HOLY SEE, supported by the US and the EU, proposed a reference to disadvantaged groups, especially people living in poverty. Delegates agreed to a proposal from JAPAN to replace a reference to education with training.

On national strategies, the EU proposed additional text on a multi-sectoral approach and accountability by governments. The EU, supported by the US, proposed ensuring coherence between national and international strategies. The G-77/CHINA preferred reference to strengthening strategies, and proposed deleting language on meso-level anti-poverty programmes. The text remains bracketed.

Delegates agreed on action paragraphs on: ensuring access for all to basic social services; encouraging sustainable rural development; developing and promoting institutional capacities; and ensuring gender equality perspective at all levels. Delegates also accepted a G-77/CHINA proposal on targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, but disagreed on restructuring public expenditure policies to make them more efficient, transparent and accountable.

Delegates agreed on references to ensuring community participation in poverty reduction strategies and to acknowledging civil society's role in delivering social services. They also agreed on assisting developing countries with poverty-related data analysis and encouraging decentralization of basic social services. Delegates did not reach consensus on improving social systems and extending coverage to, *inter alia*, vulnerable groups.

### WORKING GROUP III

Delegates met in Working Group III to present text proposals on the draft political declaration. The EU, supported by the US, suggested referring to establishing a new consensus to place people at the center of sustainable development and to foster a society for all. The G-77/CHINA stressed retaining a reference to eradication of poverty. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION preferred language on establishing standards for social development and declaring the eradication of poverty as a universal target of mankind.

On reaffirming commitments, the G-77/CHINA proposed replacing a reference to progress with language on assessment of achievements and obstacles, and suggested, with EU support, text on reaffirming commitments to POA implementation. The G-77/CHINA suggested deleting language on applying these commitments to public policy. The EU proposed adding text on key targets, and a statement on the POA as the basis for future social development. The EU also proposed replacing text on translating words into deeds with a reference acknowledging the need for a coordinated follow-up. The text was bracketed.

On addressing the imperative of social development, the EU proposed including social policy as a productive factor, and the G-77/CHINA added reference to an enabling environment. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed language on reviewing and appraising POA implementation. On a reference to attempts to improve the well-being of people, the EU suggested inserting actions, the G-77/CHINA preferred reference to concerted efforts and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed, with support from MEXICO, language on continuous efforts. The EU and the G-77/CHINA agreed that a more inclusive listing of stakeholders was needed within the reference on improving and strengthening civil society, but no consensus was reached. The EU suggested replacing the assertion that there is no single, universal path to achieving social development with one calling for further actions for

POA implementation. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by MEXICO, preferred to retain the original reference, and proposed adding language on the need for more knowledge and information.

Regarding text on growing global integration and continuing rapid advances offering previously unimagined opportunities for social and economic progress, the G-77/CHINA proposed "globalization" for "growing global integration" and, with the support of other delegates, "unprecedented" for "unimagined" opportunities. The EU supported reference to opportunities for social development rather than social and economic progress.

Regarding global integration and rapid advances having contributed to intensifying crises, insecurity, exclusion and inequality, the G-77/CHINA proposed language on new challenges for the fulfillment of commitments. The EU preferred text on stressing contributions to development and specified intensifying financial crises.

On obstacles to participation in the global economy, the G-77/CHINA specified integration and equal participation, particularly for developing countries. On language referring to inequalities in income and opportunity defeating social justice and increasing social disintegration, the G-77/CHINA preferred stating such inequalities have hindered the achievement of social justice for all and increased social disintegration. He called for reference to extending social and economic benefits in text on marginalization. The EU proposed deleting clauses on inequalities and marginalization, and suggested a reference to overcoming obstacles and realizing opportunities.

On text reiterating determination and duty to eradicate poverty, and ensuring opportunities are available for productive and fairly remunerated employment, the G-77/CHINA called for deleting "and duty," and substituting "expanded" for "available." The EU preferred a reference to an enabling environment for social development to promote full and productive employment. He proposed adding that, *inter alia*, democracy and protection of all human rights are a prerequisite for people-centered sustainable development.

On achievements being assessed in terms of economic activity and, *inter alia*, the security of people and social justice, the EU proposed a reference to human well being. The G-77/CHINA called for reference to achievements being made not only through economic activity but also through equitable distribution of wealth and, *inter alia*, guaranteeing social justice and equity between women and men. The G-77/CHINA suggested deleting language on an effective regulatory structure set by transparent and accountable government.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

The chips are on the table, as groups scramble to add proposals to the PrepCom documents. Chair Maquiera is determined to keep the mood upbeat, hoping good humor will smooth over ongoing disputes on economics and human rights. Some observers stress the Special Session's responsibility to forward a strong statement on globalization to the upcoming Millennium Assembly. Others hope to bring a few gems to Geneva, such as strong language on employment and poverty, and even that unlikely wealth redistribution tool, the Tobin tax.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** The Plenary will meet briefly at 10:00 am to discuss the Secretary-General's note on the regional symposium on socioeconomic policies during macroeconomic stabilization in countries with economies in transition (A/AC.253/15), and the accreditation of additional NGOs to the Special Session (A/AC.253/26).

**WORKING GROUPS:** Working Group I will meet in Conference Room 2 after the Plenary. Working Group III will meet in Conference Room 5 after the Plenary. Working Group II will meet in Conference Room 2 at 3:00 pm.